

SENECA MEDIA, INC.

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Genesee Country Express

113 Main St. • Dansville, New York

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We the People

This is the 18th in a weekly series, "Two Hundred Years Ago This Week," made available as a public service by the New York State Bicentennial Commission.

The Selection of the President

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention wanted to establish in the office of the president an executive with the power to act for the general good of the nation rising above the more parochial interests of congressmen. At the same time the Constitution would have to keep the president responsible to states' interests and individual liberty. "It is the most difficult of all rightly to balance the Executive," Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania told the Convention. "Make him too weak; The Legislature will usurp his powers; Make him too strong. He will usurp on the Legislature." A critical element, they all agreed, in properly balancing the executive lay in the method of the president's selection.

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention began to debate the issue of the way to select the president on the first day of June and continued that debate until a few days before signing the Constitution on Sept. 17.

This debate rarely reached the ferocity of the arguments over matters like the slave trade, nor did it threaten to strangle the Convention. But the debate did reveal the differences in the delegates' political philosophies and the realities of contemporary American politics.

The Convention considered three basic options for selecting the president. James Madison neatly summarized them on June 25: "The election must be made either by some existing authority under the National or State Constitutions—or by the people themselves." The delegates agreed with Madison that "there are objections against every mode that has been, or perhaps can be proposed."

The Convention first provided that Congress elect the President. Edmund Randolph had favored this method in May when he introduced the Virginia Plan, as did William Paterson, when he presented the New Jersey Plan in mid-June. Despite its drawbacks, this method of selection consistently emerged as the reluctant preference of the delegates until late August.

The major argument in favor of Congress electing the President was, as Charles Pinckney of South Carolina put it on June 1, that it would most likely find "that character best qualified to fill the Executive department." After two months of debate,

on July 26, George Mason of Virginia reviewed the entire matter and concluded that an election by Congress "as originally proposed, was the best. If it was liable to objections, it was liable to fewer than any other."

The objections, however, weighed heavily. This method, which one delegate said would make "Our President" a "British Minister," would lead "to Legislative tyranny" and "constant intrigue," the stock phrase for politicking. Congress and the presidential candidates, according to Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, "would bargain and play into one another's hands, votes would be given by the former under promises or expectations from the latter." The method would also open the process to foreign influence as "the great rival powers of Europe" would surely attempt to bribe influential congressmen to ensure the election of a president sympathetic to their country.

The delegates proposed a variety of schemes involving election by the state legislatures or the governors. But the states, according to Madison, had already "betrayed a strong propensity to a variety of pernicious measures" and the very purpose of the Convention was "to controul this propensity." "To avoid Sylla," Morris remarked, "we fall into Charibdis."

Direct election by the people, whether qualified or at large, found much sympathy but little solid support among the delegates. Citing the defeat of Massachusetts' Governor, James Bowdoin, after he had quelled Shays' Rebellion, Elbridge Gerry declared that "The popular mode of electing the chief Magistrate would certainly be the worst of all." "The people are uninformed, and would be misled by a few designing men." The delegates generally agreed with Madison that the people too often "prefer a Citizen of their own State" which would work much to the disadvantage of candidates from smaller states. Even more important was "the disproportion of qualified voters in the Northern and Southern States," which would hurt the South, where slaves were enumerated in the calculation of population but could not vote.

As early as June 2, James Wilson of Pennsylvania introduced a version of the electoral college which he thought would earn "confidence among the people." Madison thought the system of electors had much merit, "as the electors would be chosen for the occasion, would meet at once, and proceed immediately to an appointment, there would be very little opportunity for cabal, or corruption." Gouverneur Morris agreed that in this scheme lay the best compromise. "He considered an election by the people as the best, by the Legislature as the worst, mode. Putting both these aside, he could not but favor...a mixture of [the] lot."

Despite the fact that the plan to elect the president by Congress remained in the draft Constitution, opponents of that method persisted in calling for an electoral system. As August gave way to September and the Convention neared its close, the delegates, after much "desultory conversation," agreed on Sept. 12 that "Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the state may be entitled to in Congress..." These electors would "vote by ballot" to elect the president and vice-president.

The electoral college (modified several times since by amendment to the Constitution) was born of compromise as the best way the delegates could devise to make the president responsive to the people and states and yet retain the power to act independently.

Prepared by the Center for the Study of the American Constitution, Madison, Wisc.

Old Photo Album



POPULAR PLACE — In 1911, downtown Dansville glowed with red, white and blue while the "Welcome Mat" was out for visitors during Old Home Week. An elegantly decorated business place is shown here — The Arlington Hotel. This venerable structure first appeared on the local scene about 1850 in the role of Brace Warehouse alongside Genesee Valley Canal near Jefferson Street. In 1865, it came to Main Street on wooden skids. Renovations then converted it to the hotel named Arlington. A long line of proprietors guided operations particularly the popular bar. In January of 1904, during a raging blizzard, fire threatened the wooden structure but hardy Dansville firemen doused the blaze. The elaborate portico was added in 1907. Death knell for the venerable structure sounded in 1931 when President Herbert Hoover approved an appropriation of \$145,000 to build a Post Office in Dansville. Sure enough the Arlington Hotel site was chosen. Wrecker's hammers reduced to rubble those walls that had heard the rough language of canalmen and teamsters, the shivering shouts of firemen chilled to the bone, and the wisdom arising from debates around the mahogany strip. (Wilfred J. Rauber)

Yesteryears — A Look at History

Old Zimmerhackle — Observations, philosophy, humor and advice by Joseph W. Burgess, co-founder and editor of the Breeze before the turn of the century.

The average boy never becomes thoroughly convinced that his father likes him because he loves him until he is a father himself.

Thirteen is always an unlucky number for some men when it consists of a judge and 12 jurors.

It frequently happens that a sick man recovers before the doctors agree what is the matter with him.

"Resigned his position" and "got the bounce" look widely different to the casual observer, but they mean about the same thing — generally.

—J.W.B.

—1897—
Fifty pounds of delicious grapes can be purchased and delivered to your home for 50 cents.

The Rev. A. O. Sykes found a live partridge in his cellar last Wednesday. The Lord will provide. If Elder Sykes were not going to leave Dansville he next might find a quarter of beef in his cellar.

—1907—

We are informed that the iron work will be completed today on the new bridge crossing Stony Brook Glen.

Farmers are busy getting in their potatoes. Diggers are receiving \$1.50 per day and potato buyers are paying 49 cents a bushel at Rogersville.

Miss Clara M. Vogt and Fred H. Stevens were married last Thursday afternoon in St. Mary's rectory.

—1917—

Charles Natsch has taken possession of the Sanatorium green house which he purchased a short time ago and has re-engaged M. Michael to manage it.

By this order, the Schwarzenbach Bottling Works on Ossian St. will be closed and the government liquor license of the C. W. Woolver Drug Store will be revoked. How dry we will be.

—1927—

A deed has been presented to the Village Board by the Dansville Public Library giving the village a triangular piece of ground to make the turn at Perine St. similar to the Franklin St. turn, thereby widening the street and relieving a traffic problem.

Western New York in general and Livingston County in particular are awaiting with interest the third trial of Charles Flaherty of Mt. Morris for manslaughter, which is scheduled to get underway in Syracuse. Already, upwards of \$20,000 has been spent in trying the case.

—1937—

Sirloin steaks are 31 cents a pound at the Red and White Store.

Attorney Thomas M. Bowes has announced he will open a law office at 153 Main St. in rooms over the Murphy store.

At a party caucus, Republicans nominated Charles Campbell as candidate for supervisor. His Democratic opponent will be George Hubertus.

—1947—

About 200 students and faculty members are taking advantage of the cafeteria facilities at Dansville Central High School. A charge of 25 cents for a complete lunch is

made to the students and the teachers pay 30 cents.

—1957—

Dansville school pupils will start their first vacation of the school year today — but it's an enforced one that an estimated 300 of them won't enjoy a particle. School Superintendent Ward Legg announced yesterday that the schools will be closed for the balance of the week because of a flu epidemic which has swept elementary and high school classes. About 300 children have been stricken by the flu bug.

—1967—

Army Sp. 4 John M. York of Dansville has been decorated with the Air Medal for action against the Viet Cong near Di An in Vietnam. He is the son of Mrs. Frances York of 21 Franklin St. and is a helicopter gunner.

Oliver Towne of the Jackson Hose Co. was installed as first vice-president of the Western New York Volunteer Firemen's As-

sociation at a dinner meeting in Alexander Friday evening.

—1977—

Almost two weeks of steady rain — some of it in downpour proportions — has created serious problems for many people in the Dansville-Wayland area and cottagers at nearby Conesus Lake.

Final plans for the Next-to-New 60-40 Sale Oct. 6-8 will be made at a Noyes Memorial Hospital Auxiliary executive meeting Monday.

C. Edward Handle of Dansville was elected chairman of the Livingston County Republican Committee, defeating James Parker of Portage.

A former Dansville man, Henry S. Thompson, has retired from Foster Wheeler Energy Corp. after 41 years of service. He was coordinator of scheduling in the General Production Control Department of the Equipment Division at corporate headquarters in Livingston, N. J.

Looks Around Our Town

The Bystander

By JIM CONWAY

Here's what you've been waiting for. The 196th edition of The Old Farmer's Almanac out with its weather predictions and scores of pages which can be described as a treasure of trivia.

Let's get to the serious part first. The famed prognosticator sees a mild and dry fall and then things get worse with above normal snowfall for our area and plenty of cold temperatures. There will be a January thaw (as always) and then more snow in February (as always).

But be brave, it gets better. Warm spells during late-March will usher in an early spring. This season, however, the Almanac points out, will include cool and wet weather during May and into June. Next summer will be warmer and slightly drier than last.

So there you have it — straight from the horse's mouth. And it all started with the founder, Robert B. Thomas who was the editor from 1792 until his death in 1847. Today's publisher Rob Trowbridge and editor Judson Hale think Thomas would be pleased and proud to see that his creation has no basic changes in format — but has added nearly five times the amount of new, useful and entertaining matter. These people still use the old "secret weather forecasting formula" but have added modern scientific data to assist them. That's nice to know because some of our modern forecasters of television and newspaper fame generalize and still miss in spite of their sophisticated equipment and constant monitoring of weather patterns. Oh well, nobody's perfect.

Predictions that might puzzle Thomas are those based on an analysis of statistics, sales trends and human behavior. Now that's taking on a load that will bend even the most strong shoulder. This year's edition also talks about finding cures for baldness and offers special recipes.

It's all there in 232 pages — everything you'll want to know about almost anything. And in

today's economy, at the bargain price of \$2.50. Don't miss it.

State Senator Randy Kuhl of Hammondsport, who represents the district encompassing Steuben County, will report to constituents on television this fall and throughout the 1988 legislative session. He can be seen in this area over Dansville's Brady Cable TV (channel six) on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at noon.

If we could only find a way to harness solar energy. One second of the sun's energy is 13 million times the annual mean electricity consumption in the United States. Get with it you scientists.

Clint Cleveland, a veterans outreach specialist with the State Employment Service Office in Genesee, requests we pass along this special message.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service has launched a statewide effort to find jobs for unemployed and underemployed blind and visually impaired vets. For further info, contact Cleveland at 243-1427.

A sage once said the older you get the faster the summers go by. That may be but the vacation period also zips along too fast for youngsters — at least that's what our grandchildren proclaim.

As Charlie Brown says — "good grief" — no Sunday football.

We can split that up. Good, perhaps. Grief, hardly. There is life without NFL every Sunday and late Monday nights. From our perch, each side must share the blame. They have spent months doing nothing and all of a sudden there is a strike. No big surprise there.

There are other things to do besides cheer or boo players we don't even know and it's for sure they don't know us.

Have a good day and a nice forever.

Berry's World



"Hey, it could be worse. I could be tryin' to manage the Yankees for George Steinbrenner."

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

Wayland Central School Tax Collection Schedule

School taxes may be paid at the Business Office of Wayland Central School, 2350 Route 63, Wayland, NY from September 3 through November 2, 1987. Hours of collection are 9 AM until 3:30 PM every Monday through Friday, except September 7 and October 12.

Taxes paid on or before October 2 are not subject to a penalty fee. Payments made by mail which are postmarked October 2 will be received without fee. Taxes paid from October 3 to November 2 are charged a 2% late penalty fee. On November 3 the tax warrant will be returned to the treasurer in each county and any outstanding taxes must be paid directly to the county of residence.

Roger W. George
Business Administrator/
District Clerk
ET

8-27-T4E

LEGAL

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals of the Village of Nunda in the Village Building at 1 Mill Street at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, October 15, 1987 to consider the following application for variance of the Village Zoning Law: Application by Richard D. Dudley II of 3 Fair Street for variance to Section 903.1.1 to use his home address as a business for a retail/wholesale automobile dealer.

Larry Cox, Chairman
Zoning Board of Appeals
9-24-T3E

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE is hereby given that the Town Board of the Town of North Dansville will hold a Public Hearing on a proposed Local Law on the 13th day of October, 1987, at 5 P.M.

That said Local Law relates to flood damage prevention for the Town of North Dansville.

LEGAL

A copy of the Local Law may be inspected at the Office of the Town Clerk.

Dated: September 25, 1987.
Timothy R. Wollfanger
Town Clerk

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the State Comptroller has caused an examination to be made of the accounts and fiscal affairs of the Town of Portage, Livingston County, for the period beginning on January 1, 1986 and ending on December 31, 1986. The report of such examination has been filed in my office where it is a public record, available for inspection by all interested persons.

Cleath Kemp, Town Clerk
Town of Portage
10-1-T1E

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING UPON PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Notice is hereby given that the preliminary budget for the Town of Sparta for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 1988, has been completed and filed in the

office of the Town Clerk at 5875 Powell Road, Dansville, New York, where it is available for inspection by any person at all reasonable hours.

Further notice is hereby given that the Town Board of the Town of Sparta will meet and review said preliminary budget and hold a public hearing thereon, at the Town Hall at 7:30 P.M. on the 14th day of October, 1987, and that at such hearing any person may be heard in favor of or against any item or items therein contained.

Pursuant to Section 113 of the Town Law, the proposed salaries of the following Town Officers are hereby specified as follows:

Supervisor - \$3,000.00
Town Justice - \$1,500.00
Town Councilmen (4) - \$2,600.00
Town Clerk - \$2,500.00
Supt. of Highways - \$22,000.00
Tax Collector - \$850.00

By Order of the Town Board
Dated: September 29, 1987

Debra Halpenny
Town Clerk

10-1-T1E

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